

Every Marine in the Fight:

8412 Career Recruiters as Career Retention Specialists

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On 1 February 2007, the Commandant of the Marine Corps sent a message to all Non Commissioned Officers:

Our nation is at war - Our Corps is at war - fighting a determined enemy bent on terror and domination. Make no mistake it is a war we must win! Success by the enemy will dramatically change the world, as we know it, leaving a harsh environment for our children and grandchildren to endure.

I don't need to tell you that over five years of deployments to the fight have put a strain on our Corps. Acknowledging that, and the necessity to win this struggle, the President has recently authorized the Marine Corps to grow. In a larger Marine Corps, we will need the leadership, savvy, and determination that experienced Marines like you provide. Now, more than ever, your Marine Corps needs you.

Many of you have already sacrificed a great deal - and have already served your country in a courageous and honorable manner. However, in this hour of national crisis, I encourage every Marine who is considering closing the chapter on his or her Marine Corps service to reconsider. You are elite among the nation's warriors. America and your Corps need you now, and I ask you to re-enlist or extend your commitment - to help us defeat this enemy and see us through this crisis. Think about the experiences that you have to offer and what it could mean to your fellow Marines still engaged in the fight. I know that any decision to stay in the Corps is both very important and very personal - one that has far reaching effects on both you and your family. In light of this, I have authorized new incentives in recognition of your experience and honorable service. Contact your Commanding Officer, First Sergeant or career retention Specialists for more information.

You are part of a new generation of Marines - carrying the battle-tested colors of our Corps. You have carried them with pride and with honor; I ask you to carry them with me for just a while longer.¹

¹ General James T. Conway, e-mail message to Marines: "Once a Marine, Always a Marine", 1 Feb 2007

The way to 202K: The Marine Corps is increasing its end strength numbers. Year in and year out the Marine Corps attains its recruiting mission; this recruiting mission accomplished by the use of an extremely prepared recruiting force of (8412 MOS) career recruiters and (8411 MOS) canvassing recruiters. If the Marine Corps' truly serious about attaining 202K it must use its 8412 Career Recruiter community to embed in its operating forces as a "B" billet because 8412 Marines can use their exemplary selling skills to resell the Marines instead of using the inexperienced career retention specialists.

Background

The two most important factors affecting the Marine Corps' recruiting mission each year are the number of people who join the Marine Corps and the number of Marines that leave the Corps (End of Active Service (EAS) and Non EAS (administrative discharge) attrition).

Recruiting is the input of the Marine Corps. Each year approximately **36,000** young men and women from all across America join the Marine Corps.² These men and women are found in every corner of this nation, as well as every overseas territory. They are from all classes and all races of society. As a result there are many challenges faced by today's recruiters;

² United States Marine Corps: Concepts and Programs, 2007 (p.92)

Due to the numerous operational commitments exacerbated by the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, increased college attendance rates and declining target market population or CNIP (Civilian non-institutionalized population (18-24 years of age) all making this grueling task more difficult.³

Despite these challenges the Marine Corps has been successfully accomplishing this mission every month for the last ten years. Now, in support of the "Long War", the Marine Corps needs its recruiter's to increase its mission goals. The Marine Corps is asking for more from its Career Recruiters as the Corps grows towards 202K.

The second factor affecting the Marine Corps' recruiting mission is that each year the Marine Corps loses approximately 31,000 Marines to attrition (EAS and Non EAS). These Marines get out of the Corps for a variety of reasons.⁴ Some of the reasons Marines get out can be overcome by virtue of incentive programs and special bonuses that the Marine Corps makes available. However, other Marines that decide to leave will take significant skilled personal attention in order to overcome the individual Marines situation. To aid the Marine Corps in retention the Corps has created an (8421 MOS) Career Retention

³ Major Peter E. Lazarus, "Career Recruiters: Strategic Initiatives to Sustain Success in the ALL Volunteer Force Era," 2005 (p. 5)

⁴ Manpower (MI) Retention statistics

Specialist (CRS) who works in conjunction with the recruiting force to achieve the Marine Corps' manpower goal of 202K.

8412

The Marine Corps will make this mission by leaning heavily on the (8412) Career Recruiter, "the backbone of the recruiting force". An 8412 is an 8411 canvassing recruiter⁵ that has distinguished himself as a recruiter for several years. Following success as a canvassing recruiter and as a Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of a recruiting sub-station (RSS) he/she is eligible to apply to become an 8412 career recruiter. Once approved to become an 8412, he/she is sent to the schoolhouse at (MCRD) Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California, to become a subject matter expert in all things recruiting related:

"Career recruiters are superior recruiters who will serve to establish a cadre of professional recruiters with long-term assignments in key managerial billets to improve the management and effectiveness of the recruiting effort".⁶

The superior selling skills of the 8412 Career Recruiter are the reason why career recruiters should be responsible for the retention mission, instead of the career retention specialist.

⁵ MCO P1200.7, (MOS Manual), (p. 3-379)

⁶ MCO P1200.7, (MOS Manual), (p. 3-380)

Below is a list of vital skills that the 8412 has mastered and possesses that the CRS is beginning to learn at this time:

- (a) The 8412s duty requirements are to plan, conduct, and teach recruiting activities based upon systematic recruiting components in accordance with the Volume III.
- (b) The 8412 will conduct sales presentations with prospects for enlistments as well as teaching basic selling and communication skills to other recruiters and command group members.
- (c) The 8412 is certified in (PSS) Professional Selling Skills, and (SBC) Selling beyond the Close.
- (d) 8412s are the master salesman in his/her respective sub-station.
- (e) The 8412 are aware of what it takes to go from contact to contract. The career recruiter understands the recruiting cycle from the sense of civilian to Marine transformation.⁷

Prior to becoming an 8412, a Marine must have the prerequisite related military skill: Recruiter, 8411.

The 8412 career recruiters bring experience that the CRS just does not possess in reselling Marines. The 8412s have proven the skills and mastery of recruiting sales for several years

⁷ MCO P1200.7, (MOS Manual), (Career Recruiter Program)

prior to becoming a career recruiter. During the process of being a canvassing recruiter, he/she refines his selling skills (product knowledge and communication). After completion of a successful tour as a canvassing recruiter, a Marine is then screened in order to see if he/she has what it takes to become a Career Recruiter.

The 8412 is used to working as the NCOIC of a sub-station. Once in that station, the Marine will take ownership and set up systematic recruiting/ retention in order to accomplish his mission. Some of the required tasks identified by an 8412 that would be used in the retention mission are:

- (a) Target the population in that unit, prioritizing which Marines need to be spoken to at the appropriate time.
- (b) Generate a list of individuals w/I 15 months of EAS.
 - a. Set priority of each individual based upon MOS demand and time until EAS.
- (c) Interview based upon priority lists, by using his superior working knowledge of PSS.
- (d) Identify the Marines needs: conditions, opportunities, fact, feelings, and environment.
- (e) The 8412 can use his resident and refined knowledge to build rapport by using techniques, such as area canvassing, and telephone calls in order to set up interviews.

- (f) Build a group of proof sources with emphasis on prior service (PSEP)/ Return to Active Duty (RAD) Marines based upon their return to the Marine Corps.
- (g) Follow-ups in a systematic process 30/60/90 day working files. Currently the Corps' career planning interviews are perceived to be a waste of time.
- (h) Interview everyone until they are discharged in order to continue to identify needs and changes in circumstances, and updates for possible extensions (resell the Corps).
- (i) Send local recruiter information regarding Marines entering their area to local prior service recruiters (PSR).⁸

The 8412s possess the professional selling skills required in order to resell more Marines on staying in the Marine Corps. He is the master salesman in his unit. He is the master salesman in the Marine Corps. The Corps has even identified and tasked the 8412 to help train the CRSs at the schoolhouse.

CRS

A CRS is a career planner who performs various duties involving the retention of enlisted personnel on active duty and

⁸ GySgt Eryck Little, Assistant Recruiter Instructor, Recruiting Station Detroit, Interview by author 10 December 2007

advises all personnel of the benefits of a Marine Corps career.⁹

The vital duties of the CRS are the following:

- (a) The CRS counsels Marines concerning reenlistment options and incentives.
- (b) The CRS prepares and maintains career planning requests and records.
- (c) The CRS advises the Commanding Officer concerning career-planning matters.

Prior to becoming an 8421, a Marine must have a related military skill: administrative clerk, 0151, or recruiter, 8411.

The CRS is sent to the same schoolhouse as the (8412) career recruiter in MCRD, San Diego, in order to hone his/her skills in "systematic career planning". During this time, the CRS will be introduced to topics such as target population (FTAP), communication skills development, PSS Core, career planning interviewing, canvassing activities, working files, reenlistment waivers, and a variety of other topics.

The CRS program should play a vital role in the retention of Marines, and ultimately the Marine Corps' manpower goal. However, at this vital time the Marine Corps is losing much needed personnel that the (8412) career recruiter could retain by using his superior selling skills. Despite the attempts to

⁹ MCO P1200.7, (MOS Manual), (p. 3-381)

develop the CRS program, approximately 5,900 Marines, or 24% of the population re-enlists each year.¹⁰ The perception amongst Marines is that the CRS just administers the paperwork for reenlistment.

The qualifications to become a career retention specialist do not even address a Marines ability to sell/ resell Marines. To be a CRS, A Marine must be a Marine leader in good standing within his/her MOS, he/she must also have the appropriate obligation of service in order to move laterally to the 8421 MOS, upon successful completion of the seven-week school.

Counter Arguments

Some believe that the Marine Corps does not currently have enough 8412 Career Recruiters to fill its task organization in the recruiting force. However, the Marine Corps' manpower personnel have identified the need for more Marines to go to priority commands in order to address the recruiting effort, Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) is identified as one of those priority commands. Secondly, the number of Marines that attrite each year dictates the recruiting goal mission. By placing 8412s as CRSs the Corps would retain more Marines thus reducing the needed recruiting goal.

¹⁰ Manpower (MI) retention statistics, 2007

Opponents feel that by taking some of the 8412s resident knowledge and applying it to the retention of Marines, instead of recruiting Marines, the Corps gives the perception of lost focus on the accession mission. However, as previously stated by placing 8412s as CRSs the Corps would retain more Marines thus reducing the needed recruiting goal each fiscal year.

Opponents would argue that one of the main advantages of being an 8412 is that the Marine can homestead and the monetary cost would be too expensive.¹¹ This can still be accomplished since the embedding of the 8412 community is labeled more as a temporary tour, than it is a Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

Many fear that the Corps' 8412s have embedded themselves within the respective communities as fixtures in that community. Removing the Marine may cost us contracts in the future, by losing contacts of key influencers. During this "Long War" the 8412 would have to make contact with the local influencers to prepare him/her for the temporary absence of the Marine during this deployment period. As well as, the RS Commanding Officer would have to either leave the NCOIC slot open for the duration of the 8412s absence, or he would have to (PCS) Permanent Change

¹¹ Major Peter E. Lazarus, "Career Recruiters: Strategic Initiatives to Sustain Success in the ALL Volunteer Force Era," 2005 (p. 17)

of Station the Marine upon his return. This can be accomplished during a scheduled move within the Recruiting Station

Conclusion

The Marine Corps is losing out on Marines who could be resold on staying in. The Corps loses a captive audience prior to the Marines departure from service. The Corps is losing these Marines because it's not probing the departing Marines deep enough to find the Marine's needs and desires. The 8412 career recruiter has been successfully selling young men and women on the Marine Corps for years. The way to 202K is by embedding some of the 8412 Career Recruiters into the Corps' operating forces. This will allow the experienced 8412 Marines to use their exemplary selling skills to resell the Marines instead of using the inexperienced career retention specialists to shape the Corps recruiting mission.

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